

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 01183 110221Z  
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04  
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01  
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ACDA-07 /097 W  
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R 100715Z JUN 77  
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INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI  
AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1183

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: CH, VM

SUBJ: VIETNAMESE LEADERS' VISITS TO PEKING

1. SUMMARY: VIETNAMESE PREMIER PHAM VAN DONG AND DEFENSE MINISTER VO NGUYEN GIAP HAVE RECEIVED TOP-LEVEL TREATMENT DURING THEIR VISITS TO PEKING IN THE PAST WEEK. ACCORDING TO DIPLOMATIC RUMOR, RESUMPTION OF CHINESE SUPPLIES OF FOOD-STUFFS AND COAL MAY HAVE BEEN ONE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION, WHILE CONFLICTING NATIONAL CLAIMS IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN RAISED. END SUMMARY.

2. THE PRC'S RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM HAVE RECEIVED SUDDEN  
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PAGE 02 PEKING 01183 110221Z

PROMINENCE OVER THE PAST WEEK, FIRST WITH THE VISIT BY GENERAL VO NGUYEN GIAP, AND THEN WITH PREMIER PHAM VAN DONG'S STOPOVER ON HIS WAY HOME FROM EUROPE. BOTH LEADERS MET WITH CHAIRMAN HUA KUO-FENG --GIAP ON JUNE 2, THE DAY OF HIS ARRIVAL IN PEKING, AND DONG ON JUNE 8. PREMIER DONG HAS STAYED THREE DAYS SO FAR IN PEKING, LONGER THAN USUAL FOR A STOPOVER, AND WAS MET AND

HOSTE BY VICE PREMIER LI HSIEN-NIEN, THIRD IN THE PRC HIERARCHY AND DONG'S APPROXIMATE COUNTERPART. BY CONTRAST, ON HIS PREVIOUS OVERNIGHT STOP IN PEKING IN MID-APRIL, DONG SAW ONLY VICE PREMIER CHEN HSI-LIEN.

3. GIAP, WHO ARRIVED AT THE HEAD OF A LARGE MILITARY DELEGATION, IS HERE AS GUEST OF THE CHINESE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. IN ADDITION TO A TALK WITH CHAIRMAN HUA AND VICE CHAIRMAN YEH CHIEN-YING, GIAP HAD AT LEAST TWO SESSIONS WITH CHEN HSI-LIEN AND ATTENDED A BANQUET HOSTED BY CHEN, LEAVING PEKING JUF 7 FOR A VISIT TO PRC MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN THE SENSITIVE NORTHEAST. HE WILL PRESUMABLY RETURN TO PEKING FOR ANOTHER BANQUET AND PERHAPS FURTHER TALKS BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR HANOI.

4. THE PEKING DIPLOMATIC CIRCUIT IS FULL OF RUMORS, BUT NO HARD INFORMATION, CONCERNING THE PURPOSE OF THE VISITS. SOME OF OUR DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES HAVE HEARD FROM THE SOVIET EMBASSY THAT GIAP INTENDED TO PRESS THE CHINESE ON THE LATTER'S REPORTED CUTOFF- OF FOOD-STUFFS AND COAKING COAL TO VIETNAM LAST WINTER. THE CUTOFF WAS PRESUMABLY OCCASIONED BY EARTHQUAKE DAMAGE TO THE KAILUAN MINE COMPLEX, CHINA'S GREATEST SINGLE SOURCE OF COKING COAL, AND BY HARSH WEATHER WHICH AFFECTED SOME OF CHINA'S AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION THIS YEAR. THE VIETNAMESE, HOWEVER, HAVE APPARENTLY SUFFERED PERHAPS MORE SERIOUS WEATHER DAMAGE, AND RESUMPTION OF A STEADY FLOW OF CHINESE CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 PEKING 01183 110221Z

SUPPLIES MAY WELL BE A HIGH PRIORITY IN HANOI.

5. GIAP AND DONG, HOWEVER, PRESUMABLY HAVE OTHER MATTERS TO DISCUSS. THE VIETNAMESE TOLD ONE ASIAN EMBASSY THAT RESUMPTION OF SMALL ARMS DELIVERIES WOULD BE RAISED BY GIAP. THERE IS ALSO SOME SPECULATION HERE THAT BORDER QUESTIONS, PERHAPS INCLUDING THE DELICATE ISSUE OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA ISLANDS, WOULD BE ONE OF THE TOPICS OF CONVERSATION, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF HANOI'S RECENT PROCLAMATION OF ITS 200 MILE ECONOMIC ZONE. (HOWEVER, ONE VIETNAMESE SOURCE HERE IS REPORTED TO HAVE DENIED ISLANDS OR BORDERS WOULD BE DISCUSSED.) WE NOTE THAT PRC MEDIA HAVE MADE NO REFERERNCES TO THE ISLANDS IN RECENT WEEKS, IN CONTRAST TO RATHER OBVIOUS PROPAGANDA WHICH COINCIDED WITH SOME EARLIER VISITS BY VIETNAMESE LEADERS.

6. MANY ASPECTS OF THE VISITS REMAIN SHROUDED IN MYSTERY. AFTER HIS MEETING WITH CHAIRMAN HUA, FOR

INSTANCE, DONG DROPPED COMPLETELY FROM VIEW. WHAT IS  
CLEAR IS THAT THE CHINESE, THROUGH THE SYMBOLISM OF  
PROMPT AGJFAS#TO HUA AND OTHER EVIDENCE OF HIGH-LEVEL  
INTEREST IN BOTH GIAP AND DONG, HAVE GONE OUT OF  
THEIR WAY TO CORRECT THE IMPRESSION OF PREVIOUS  
STOPOVERS BY VIETNAMESE LEADERS THAT PEKING WAS  
DOWNPLAYING OR SHOWING DISPLEASURE WITH ITS RELATIONS  
WITH HANOI. IT IS TOO EARLY TO SAY WHETHER THE  
SYMBOLISM WILL BE MATCHED BY ANY REAL SUBSTANCE,  
PARTICULARLY BY WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE ON CON-  
FLICTING NATIONAL CLAIMS IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA.  
THOMAS

NOTE BY OC/T: PEKING 1183(# )AS RECEIVED.

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## Message Attributes

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